

**What is Claimed is:**

1. A system for exploiting discount opportunities relating to invoices billed from a supplier to a buyer, the invoices having invoice terms which state a discount price if the invoice is paid within a discount period and a full price of the invoice is not paid within the discount

5 period, the system comprising the steps of:

identifying invoices which have discount prices associated with payment of the invoice during the discount period;

providing information relating to the invoices on which discounts are available to prospective bidders;

10 receive bids from respective potential bidders which indicate the bidders terms upon which the respective potential bidders will pay the invoices during the discount period;

select a winning bidder from the respective potential bidders, the winning bidder is selected based upon select criteria, whereby if no respective potential bidders meet the select criteria, no winning bidder will be selected.

15 2. The system as recited in claim 1 wherein the winning bidder pays the discount price of the invoice before the end of a discount period, and the supplier receives payment of the discount price before the end of the discount period.

3. The system as recited in claim 2 wherein the buyer pays the full price of the invoice after the discount period has expired.

20 4. The system as recited in claim 3 wherein the winning bidder is paid the discount price plus a agreed upon return after the buyer has paid the full price of the invoice.

5. The system as recited in claim 4 wherein the buyer receives a rebate after the full price of the invoice has been paid.

6. The system as recited in claim 1 wherein the potential bidders are pre-qualified and assigned a numerical code to indicate preferences on the type of invoices on which the respective potential bidder will bid.

7. The system as recited in claim 6 wherein the invoice is numerically coded according to appropriate criteria.

8. The system as recited in claim 7 wherein the numerical coding of the potential bidders and the numerical coding of the invoice is compared, whereby only invoices which meet the respective bidders preferences will be sent to that respective bidder.

9. The system as recited in claim 1 wherein a discount agent uses the internet for the bidding process.

10. A method of exploiting discount opportunities relating to invoices billed from a supplier to a buyer, the invoices having invoice terms which state a discount price if the invoice is paid within a discount period and a full price of the invoice is not paid within the discount period, the method comprising the steps of:

inputting relevant data from all invoices received by a buyer into a computer data base;

searching the computer data base to determine which invoices have the discount price if the invoice is paid within the discount period;

generating a report with all invoices which have the discount price;

utilizing the report to pay the discount price to the supplier during the discount period.

11. A method as recited in claim 10 having the additions step of numerically coding all invoices which have a discount price.

12. A method as recited in claim 11 having the additions steps of:  
providing information relating to the invoices on which discounts are available to  
prospective bidders;

receive bids from respective potential bidders which indicate the bidders terms  
5 upon which the respective potential bidders will pay the invoices during the discount period;  
select a winning bidder from the respective potential bidders, the winning bidder  
is selected based upon select criteria, whereby if no respective potential bidders meet the select  
criteria, no winning bidder will be selected.

13. The system as recited in claim 12 wherein the potential bidders are pre-qualified  
and assigned a numerical code to indicate preferences on the type of invoices on which the  
10 respective potential bidder will bid.

14. The system as recited in claim 13 wherein the numerical coding of the potential  
bidders and the numerical coding of the invoice is compared, whereby only invoices which meet  
the respective bidders preferences will be sent to that respective bidder.

15. The system as recited in claim 14 wherein the winning bidder pays the discount  
price of the invoice before the end of a discount period, and the supplier receives payment of the  
discount price before the end of the discount period.

16. The system as recited in claim 15 wherein the buyer pays the full price of the  
invoice after the discount period has expired.

20 17. The system as recited in claim 16 wherein the winning bidder is paid the discount  
price plus a agreed upon return after the buyer has paid the full price of the invoice.

18. The system as recited in claim 17 wherein the buyer receives a rebate after the full  
price of the invoice has been paid.

19. A method of exploiting discount opportunities relating to invoices billed from a supplier to a buyer, the invoices having invoice terms which state a discount price if the invoice is paid within a discount period and a full price of the invoice is not paid within the discount period, the method comprising the steps of:

- 5 numerically coding the invoices according to appropriate criteria;
- numerically coding potential bidders to indicate preferences on the type of invoices on which the respective potential bidder will bid;
- matching the numerical coding of the potential bidders and the numerical coding of the invoice;
- 10 providing information relating to the invoices which match the numerical coding of respective prospective bidders to such respective prospective bidders;
- receive bids from respective potential bidders which indicate the bidders terms upon which the respective potential bidders will pay the invoices during the discount period;
- select a winning bidder from the respective potential bidders, the winning bidder is selected based upon select criteria, whereby if no respective potential bidders meet the select criteria, no winning bidder will be selected.
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20. The method as recited in claim 19 wherein the winning bidder pays the discount price of the invoice before the end of a discount period, and the supplier receives payment of the discount price before the end of the discount period.

20 21. The system as recited in claim 20 wherein the buyer pays the full price of the invoice after the discount period has expired.

22. The system as recited in claim 21 wherein the winning bidder is paid the discount price plus a agreed upon return after the buyer has paid the full price of the invoice.

23. The system as recited in claim 22 wherein the buyer receives a rebate after the full price of the invoice has been paid.